

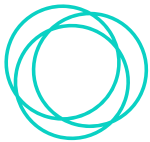


**BAYARD**

European Data Syndication Services

# WHY PIM ISN'T A DIY PROJECT

Bring your Product Content to Life.



## PIM COMPLETELY IN-HOUSE? NEVER A GOOD IDEA!

»In many cases, we are asked for help when the damage has already been done.«

Quick, affordable, easy – this seems to be the contemporary zeitgeist when it comes to product data management. Many vendors jump on that train and try to outdo each other with their intuitive interfaces, free basic versions and preconfigured data structures. Many companies are convinced by these temptations and start the implementation of **the new PIM system** on their own. Oftentimes, we are asked to join the project only when the first challenges arise – which they will inevitably do when there is no clearly defined strategy. Almost always DIY projects like these cost more time and money in the end than a well thought-through PIM project would have.

The reasons for this are summarised in this paper – I wish you an enjoyable read!



Sincerely yours

**BJÖRN BAYARD**

CEO | BAYARD GmbH

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## PIM IS EVERYTHING BUT SIMPLE

»Download, open, define attributes, and done? Unfortunately, it's not that simple.«

Too good to be true? More and more PIM suppliers offer readily configured solutions to download either free of charge or as free demo trials. The message is clear: **complicated and elaborate is a thing of the past – simplicity is all the rage.** Systems also entice users with appealing and intuitive user interfaces. Many companies are convinced by this without considering that a whole series of key aspects need to be reflected and decided on before introducing a (new) PIM solution. This includes an exact concept of the data model as well as identifying and documenting all of the processes of the organisation and systems that supply and consume data. The later these topics are addressed, the more expensive and drawn out

the project will become. But one thing is certain: there's no avoiding it. If the data model of the PIM system is unable to model the requirements of various departments and the integration of neighbouring systems does not run smoothly, then the **initial excitement will soon give way to frustration.** This applies in particular to topics that entail specialist knowledge, experience and permanent 'looking after', such as GDSN or eCI@ss. It also applies to replacement projects of in-house developments that fully cover the processes and organisation, often contain complex and volatile price information and are closely fused with the ERP system.

### As a result:

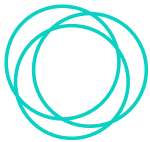
Users are increasingly unhappy and resort to creative workarounds, the suppliers' data import won't work and requires subsequent manual adaptation, lots of time and money is spent on adjustments and interfaces and, in many cases, the old system continues to run in parallel to be on the safe side. This **overloads resources, causes the data quality to suffer while new requirements accumulate** incessantly and the IT department can't keep up.

Not only does this slow down business developments, but it also slows down members of staff who rely on a functioning, neat PIM system. Increasingly networked information gives unprecedented insights into products, customers and processes, and therefore into the opportunity to use one's own communication more consciously. But the road to arrive at this point is anything but trivial.



**»THE ROAD TO SOUND,  
NETWORKED INFORMATION  
IS ANYTHING BUT TRIVIAL.«**





## NO CONCEPT WITHOUT AN OBJECTIVE

»What do I want to achieve with a new PIM system?«

Developing an early understanding of what the PIM project actually means for the company is therefore crucial. Setting an objective stating »the old PIM system needs to be replaced« is not enough. Instead, requirements from every department must be gathered and prioritised in order to translate these into measurable objectives. Ideally, PIM is a project driven by the business and should be able to handle current as well as future issues. If the project is anchored in the IT department without communicating with the business, there is a risk that user requirements will only emerge gradually, data models and

processes are built on incomplete information and the necessary classifications, exchange formats or messages can no longer be generated with the PIM system. The project quickly becomes bigger and more unmanageable and often leads to failure. Add to this the fact that companies often **lack experience with PIM systems**, meaning it is unclear which systems and tools can even be used to solve certain problems.



In addition to requirements, the exact identification of the processes also plays a major role, as **the organisation can only be successfully transferred into a new environment once it is clear how a company works.** This includes all workflows as well as creative Excel makeshift solutions that are often still used in many areas and are just waiting to be replaced by more efficient workflows. At the end of the anamnesis, it must be clear where the data is coming from, where and how it needs to be distributed, which rules and validation criteria must be adhered to

at which stage and how varying data formats and data quality will be handled. In general, it must be determined beforehand what data quality means to all those involved and how it can be achieved, adhered to and assessed. Another aspect to consider is whether additional domains such as customers or locations need to be considered in addition to the product domain, as well as what the actual onboarding process will look like.



The entirety of all processes and requirements forms the foundation for a valid data model concept to be modelled by the PIM or MDM system. Collecting, collating and validating all of this information is a task that is barely achievable by the company's in-house staff.

An outsider's view with the experience from a multitude of PIM projects, connected specialist topics, best practices and a neutral stance with management's strategic objectives in mind is essential for this purpose.



## NOT ALL PIM SYSTEMS ARE CREATED EQUAL

»The system selection determines the subsequent need for adaptation.«

Oftentimes, companies are affected too much by basic factors such as the size of the company, its turnover and market presence when choosing a system. It is much more important, however, for the system to fit the product data, data model and processes. To assess this, in-depth insights into the systems as well as a lot of project experience are required. Even a PIM system that is highly regarded by market analysts can be unsuitable for a specific company.

Another observation from numerous PIM projects shows that many PIM systems are overloaded today with additional topics such as content distribution or content sourcing.

This results in an increased need for adaptation during implementation and leads to the problem that processes and data can hardly be managed later on.

That's why a sound decision takes much more than researching neutral market studies, vendor websites and presentations. **There can only be sufficient clarity for an optimal system selection through competent and experienced consulting, thorough requirement analysis as well as workshops with the individual vendors.** This initial effort will help to avoid expensive adjustments.





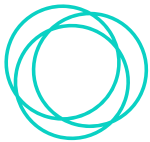


## INTEGRATION AS A KEY SKILL

**»Integration involves technology, but the processes and organisation are just as important.«**

The integration of a system as central and cross-departmental as a PIM system requires architecture experience that few companies can draw on internally. But it's not only the technical integration that forms a key challenge of a PIM project, as the processes and organisation also require integrating, otherwise there is a risk of causing new workarounds, for instance when it comes to uploading data.

If there are issues during integration, this automatically leads to greater investments of time and resources. At the same time, a continuous series of new requirements arise that are waiting in the pipeline to be implemented, further slowing down business developments.



## PIM AFFECTS EVERYONE

»The cooperation between IT and the business determines the success of PIM projects.«

It's not just monetary resources that are expended, as in-house expenses must also realistically be expected from the outset. Product information is important for almost every department for various reasons. That's why it must be clear from the outset that both the business and the IT departments must provide their own resources that accompany the PIM project alongside their actual tasks while representing their respective interests.

As there aren't many companies that have their own teams to implement enterprise projects, they shouldn't shy away from **the support of external PIM project experts** who have industry and market knowledge crucial to key decisions and project implementation.



## COMMUNICATION IS EVERYTHING

»Just like couples therapy won't work without a therapist, enterprise projects require an outsider who will moderate and not only step in when communication becomes uncomfortable.«

Software integrators aren't just there to take on and accompany the technical and organisational integration, contribute their experience to the project and support the strategic business objectives with their knowledge. One key aspect that is often underestimated by many companies is **cross-departmental cooperation**, particularly the communication aspect. This ranges from moderating requirement workshops and goes much further than reconciling with management. PIM projects entail profound changes to the

daily work of staff members in almost every department. These changes often also extend to the organisation, as new roles and responsibilities are created and other tasks become obsolete. **Change management** engages members of staff from the start and involves them with the design and implementation of milestones. This ensures that the defined objectives are worked towards, and that acceptance of the tool and the new tasks grows along with the project.

### In short:

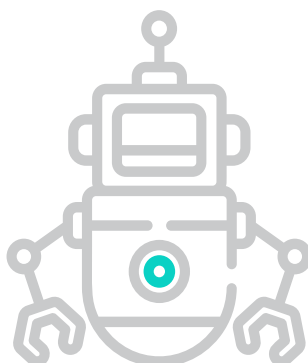
Companies that want to introduce a new PIM system must first understand that it's not just the introductory project that awaits them, but rather an ongoing programme with continuous new requirements and use cases. Add to this an ongoing range of new distribution channels such as marketplaces and apps, suppliers, data pools, regulatory aspects and product ranges that require adjustments to the data model itself and the processes.

A neatly arranged and integrated PIM system with clearly defined workflows, tasks and responsibilities forms the foundation. Due to the complexity of this task that requires design, integration, project management and communication, the support of an **experienced expert is the key to success.**





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